

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 135  
By Ramsey

A RESOLUTION to honor Mr. C. M. "Bill" Gatton of Kingsport on receiving the 2005 *Time* Magazine Quality Dealer Award.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those citizens who, in their years of work, have performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm; and

WHEREAS, Carol Martin "Bill" Gatton, President of Bill Gatton Chevrolet-Cadillac-Isuzu, is one such estimable person who has served with dedication and probity for 45 years in the field of automobile sales; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gatton's outstanding abilities were recently recognized when he was named a recipient of the 2005 *Time* Magazine Quality Dealer Award; and

WHEREAS, the award is sponsored by *Time* in association with the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company and in cooperation with National Automobile Dealers Association; the award program recognizes outstanding new car dealers for exceptional dealership performance and distinguished community service; and

WHEREAS, the son of a successful farmer and cattle breeder, Mr. Gatton knew early in life that he was destined for salesmanship; upon observing his father's negotiations with a Chevrolet dealer, six-year-old Bill Gatton committed to pursuing the dream of running a Chevrolet dealership; and

WHEREAS, not one to let good opportunities pass, Mr. Gatton, a college student at the time, expressed his interest in the automobile industry to a family friend who was also a most successful Chevrolet dealer, and Bill Gatton was given the opportunity to prove his worth selling new Chevrolets as a campus representative for two years; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from the University of Kentucky in 1954, Mr. Gatton performed his patriotic duty by serving for two admirable years in the United States Army before entering the University of Pennsylvania's prestigious Wharton School of Business where he earned a Master of Business Administration degree in finance and banking in 1958; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gatton began his estimable professional career in automobile sales in 1959 when, relying on a \$25,000 loan from his father, who predicted that the young Bill Gatton would be "broke in six months and back on the farm where [he] belonged," and on his own will to succeed, he was awarded a dealer franchise and became the youngest Volkswagen dealer in America; and

WHEREAS, rather than returning to the farm as predicted, Mr. Gatton became a brilliant and successful businessman, and has provided returns both within and beyond the confines of his community in the form of his extensive philanthropy; and

WHEREAS, he is a dedicated member and an integral part of the Bristol community; The Bill Gatton Foundation, established in 1985, has provided over \$20 million in support to various colleges, the Boys Club, the Salvation Army, and the Mayo Clinic, in addition to providing college scholarships to many deserving students; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his unwavering commitment to the University of Kentucky, where he has been inducted into the College of Business and Economics Alumni Hall of Fame (1995) and into the University's Hall of Distinguished Alumni (2000), the University's College of Business and Economics now bears the name "Carol Martin Gatton College of Business and Economics"; and

WHEREAS, as an active member of the greater Bristol area with an unfaltering interest in bettering his community, Mr. Gatton has participated extensively in area civic organizations, including his membership and service on numerous Boards of Directors such as the Bristol Rotary Club, the Bristol Industrial Development Board, and the Bristol Regional Medical Center; and

WHEREAS, also devoted to serving his native Kentucky, he has served laudably on the Board of Directors of the University of Kentucky Business Partnership Foundation and the Kentucky Economic Development Corporation; and

WHEREAS, for his exceptional dedication to community service, he has been inducted into the Owensboro, Kentucky Junior Achievement Business Hall of Fame (2000) and was named the March of Dimes Man of the Year by the Western Kentucky Chapter (1994); and

WHEREAS, his astute leadership as Chairman of the Board of Directors, from 1980 to 2002, of Area Bancshares, the largest bank holding company located in Kentucky with over \$3 billion in assets and seventeen subsidiary banks prior to being sold to BB&T Corporation in March 2002, stands as a testament to his extraordinary drive and vision; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Mr. Gatton has demonstrated a remarkable ability to motivate others to reach their potential, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his industry peers and fellow community members alike; and

WHEREAS, his outstanding professional and civic accomplishments aside, Mr. Gatton is also deeply devoted to his family, and he has always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; he enjoys the warm companionship of his wife, Leigh, and their loving family; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gatton exemplifies the spirit of allegiance to community that is characteristic of a true Tennessean; his dedication to his profession and to the good people of the states of Tennessee and Kentucky is unparalleled; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Mr. C. M. "Bill" Gatton of Kingsport, exemplary citizen, consummate business professional, and loving family man, on his outstanding career, his far-reaching philanthropy, and on his receipt of the 2005 *Time* Magazine Quality Dealer Award.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.